

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES
2007 ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS ON IMPLEMENTATION
OF PUBLIC LAW 106-107

September 1, 2006 - November 30, 2007

I. Overview

During the reporting period of September 1, 2006 through November 30, 2007, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) awarded 1,133 grants, cooperative agreements and fellowships in 60 grant programs totaling \$136,805,505. The vast majority of these awards were discretionary (1,077). Only 56 were mandatory formula awards to our state humanities councils.

The National Endowment for the Humanities continues to play an active part in all facets of the government-wide grant streamlining efforts and in a number of other inter-agency groups concerned with grants management. Agency staff are active members of the Grants Executive Board, Grants Policy Committee, Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Grants Committee, Federal Grant Streamlining Program Interagency Pre-Award and Post-Award Working Groups, and two of their subgroups, one tasked with development of the Performance Progress Report (PPR) and the other with the development of the Federal Financial Report (FFR). NEH has also been represented on the Research Business Models Subcommittee of the National Science and Technology Council's Committee on Science, the subcommittee that developed a government-wide standard format for performance progress reporting on research grants (RPPR) and cooperative agreements in coordination with the Public Law 106-107 Work Group. Involvement in these groups allows us to stay informed and find additional opportunities to participate in streamlining activities.

On behalf of the workgroup for the FFR, NEH staff took an active role in providing to OMB updated versions of the FFR form and instructions and participated in discussions with OMB staff to facilitate what is hoped to be the upcoming final issuance of the FFR in the Federal Register. In regard to the PPR and RPPR, NEH continued to provide input into further revisions of the forms and instructions.

As a member of the Post-Award Reporting Subgroup, NEH staff also reviewed and provided comments on final drafts of the government-wide real property and tangible personal property reports and related instructions and business rules.

NEH is an active participant on the Pre-Award Workgroup which is developing guidance for issuance by OMB on the structure and content of awards, including both administrative and national policy requirements and trafficking in persons policy guidance. The administrative and national policy requirements guidance will eventually replace the OMB Circular A-102 common rule and OMB Circular A-110 and will reside in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations. Standard language for and placement of award terms and conditions will provide greater clarity and allow for increased understanding by recipients of the requirements that apply to them. This effort has the potential to reduce the direct burden on applicants and recipients.

NEH staff attended meetings of the Research Business Models Subgroup, which prepared a performance progress report for research and research-related grants, and have continued to provide review and comments on final refinements. The proposed Research Performance Progress Report has recently been published in the Federal Register for comment.

II. Grants.gov

During the reporting period, 77 NEH grant announcements were posted on Grants.gov "FIND". This represents 100% of NEH's discretionary grant funding opportunities. All of these grant programs are available for electronic application through Grants.gov.

5,333 grant applications were received electronically via Grants.gov during the reporting period.

The NEH CIO has conducted numerous in-house training sessions for NEH Grants.gov users. NEH program staff have also conducted numerous training sessions for NEH applicants during outreach visits around the U.S. The NEH Office of Information Resources Management placed some PowerPoint presentations about Grants.gov onto the agency's intranet site for use by NEH staff in outreach to our applicant community. NEH staff can use these or modify them for their outreach events.

In addition, all of the funding opportunity announcements on the NEH website contain the latest guidelines explaining how to apply via Grants.gov. NEH has also conducted outreach to the grantee community and the general public through our electronic newsletter Connect, which has included articles about Grants.gov and how to apply for an NEH grant electronically.

Although NEH has enthusiastically embraced Grants.gov and all grant applications are received through the Grants.gov portal, we cannot demonstrate any cost-savings internal to the agency. Given the size of

our agency, we do not have the economies of scale that would give us cost savings. That said, there are many non cost-related benefits to Grants.gov, including increases in efficiency for the applicant and for the NEH. Grants.gov benefits NEH and its grant programs by providing a single location to publish grant (funding) opportunities and application packages, and by providing a single site for the grants community to apply for grants using common forms, processes and systems. Also, by publishing its funding opportunities on Grants.gov, NEH is reaching a larger, more diverse applicant pool.

III. Grants Management Line of Business (GMLoB)

In October and November 2007, NEH staff met with officials from two Grants Management Line of Business (GMLoB) consortia leads to learn about their grant management systems and to view demos of the various features of each system. These two consortia leads are the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and the Department of Education. Since NEH is not a research agency, and will therefore not be eligible to migrate to the GMLOB consortia led by the National Science Foundation, no informational meeting was requested.

NEH is currently in the process of preparing the required Fit-Gap analyses for the HHS/ACF and Department of Education's grant management systems and will submit them to OMB by the 12/31/07 deadline.

IV. Debarment and Suspension

NEH implemented OMB's guidance on nonprocurement suspension and debarment by adopting the guidelines in Subtitle B, Chapter 33, Part 3369 of Title 2 of the CFR on March 1, 2007. (*Federal Register*, Volume 72, No. 40, Thursday, March 1, 2007, page 9235). NEH also removed 45 CFR Part 1169 in the same notice published on March 1, 2007.

V. Agency Commitment to Future Involvement with Government-wide Grants Initiatives

NEH continues to be fully committed to future involvement in all of the government-wide grants initiatives. As outlined in section I., NEH staff are very involved in all of the government-wide work groups that are tasked with streamlining the grants process and the various aspects of grant management. NEH will continue to meet all requirements and deadlines in regard to the GMLob initiative and to participate 100% in Grants.gov.

NEH continually works to improve the effectiveness and performance of its grant programs through staff evaluations and the solicitation of advice about procedures and guidelines from the humanities practitioners who serve as panelists in the agency's merit review process. In addition, visitors to and users of the NEH website at www.neh.gov are invited to provide comments and suggestions on our programs, guidelines, forms, and instructions.

NEH management holds monthly meetings with the Division Directors and Office Heads, where updates on grants streamlining efforts and ideas for new initiatives are discussed. In addition, the NEH's CIO holds periodic meetings attended by representatives of each NEH office to discuss the latest developments on Grants.gov and other electronic projects and initiatives that are underway both government-wide and within the agency.

NEH continues to review, update and streamline grant application guidelines and forms through the mechanism of the internal agency clearance process. The roster of clearing officers includes two members who are NEH's representatives to the Federal Grant Streamlining Program Interagency Pre-Award and Post-Award Working Groups. As a result, all NEH grant application guidelines have been revised to be consistent with the latest government-wide initiatives on grants streamlining. In addition, agency staff are continually streamlining the instructions on the NEH website for applicants on how to utilize Grants.gov effectively.

Over the course of the past several years, NEH has posted on the NEH website the majority of forms, policies, and instructions that grantees use in the administration of their grant. Grantees can go to the "Grant Management" page of the NEH website and download or find links to the most up-to-date version of all the documents that they may need to administer their NEH grant. In the past, paper copies of most of these documents were mailed to the grantee with the grant award letter. Use of the NEH website for this purpose has insured that grantees have the latest information and forms pertaining to grant management at their disposal so these efforts will continue in the future.